

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Cedomir Markovic
March 2, 1995
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Cedomir Markovic, conducted on March 2, 1995 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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CEDOMIR MARKOVIC

March 2, 1995

Question:

Answer: My name is Cedomir Markovic. I was born August 7, 1921 in _____, it is _____ down there.

Q. What was your family involved with?

A. My father essentially had a farm and _____. It was his business.

Q. Did you have brothers and sisters?

A. I had three sisters and one brother.

Q. Were you active before the war, were you involved with any political authorities?

A. I was in a radical party which means the _____ party. So, my father was there and I was in the so called _____ organization. After World War II, during the World War II, the personal police in the states he didn't belong to any party. That was the military you couldn't be in any party.

Q. What point was this now?

A. It was from '38 to '42.

Q. Why were you all involved with this party?

A. We had a so called democratic party. It was mostly creation and so socialists and other combinations and we were --

Q. What did that mean?

A. It means royal, monarchy, a king. It was at that time Alexander II. They killed him in Marseilles in '34, and Hitler against him in the organization they killed all the people they didn't like because at that time during the Hitler, after '33, it was a so called small _____, it was Yugoslavia, Poland, Rumania, Greece, Czechoslovakia against _____ Hitler, the organization so called smaller _____. King Alexander was the organizer. So, to explain this thing, the German organized some terrorist group _____ terrorist

and they killed the king in Paris. He was going to meet _____ in Paris. It was some conference about this political situation or something against Nazis.

Q. What I'm trying to understand is what were the values or the goals of the _____ party that were different from the socialists or the communists?

A. Like here, you have socialists, the democratic party, you have republicans. This is the difference.

Q. Now, at the time the war broke out, were you married, were you working, what were you doing?

A. No, I was not married. I was in the air force and _____ my uncle was the chief of the MI-5 in Great Britain. _____ .

Q. How much were you concerned with Hitler and Nazism before they came into Yugoslavia?

A. We were Austrian born, and the time before World II, after World I, Austria had 76 million population and she lost everything. She lost part of _____ Czechoslovakia, Hungary, it was Hungarian Austrian monarchy. Czechoslovakia was part of Austria, so Austria went from 76 million to four million, and the Germans they came back to Austria. There was high unemployment. Austria was in trouble. Then mostly the older party in Austria was _____, this was the socialists that tried to _____ and there was the _____ which was the country's security. The _____, the revolution. The Socialists started in Linc, in Austria and the prime minister, they made a short but bloody counter revolution and killed them. There was in Berlin, Luxembourg and Knect, they started a revolution in Germany so mostly the socialists, the party it was like socialist only nationalists. Hitler organized this stuff, but it was not normal. Most of the nationalist _____ in Germany. It came legally to the power. Hindenberg who was at the time for the military was prime minister or president.

Q. How were you thinking this would affect you in Belga?

A. _____, there was supremacy, so called German supremacy. That was the idea. My struggle, Hitler wrote there was mostly his -- Alfred Rosenberg, I think he was Jewish. He's a philosophical and political advisor he wrote in this book, my accounts, my struggle, and then he designed what he was going to do to destroy the Jews to make socialism or whatever. Usually _____ what was taught in his time, if you want to deceive your enemy tell him the truth because any way he doesn't believe you. So, the people didn't believe what Hitler thought. I know many Jews in Germany, they were more German than Germans themselves, but they didn't believe what Hitler was going to do. That was the problem.

Q. So, the people that lived near you didn't think it was going to be a problem?

A. Oh, yes, we thought. Not only did we have problems with Yugoslavia, that time after their King Alexander was assassinated in Marseilles, his son was not juvenile and he was declared as king, but since he was not 18 he get three people as advisors. Prince Paul and from the Creation one I don't remember the name now, and from the Slovenian, the three people directed him. One part of Austria would remain Yugoslavia, was tied to the _____ signed the _____ agreement. So did Yugoslavia. That was not for the British and the other people against Hitler French. So, at that time when they went to sign this contract, declared king and it was on March 27, 1941 on April 6, Hitler was already declaring war. While we were talking he was thinking war declaration.

Q. Was the country unanimous in opposing Hitler?

A. Oh, yes. Some people, for example, when Prince Paul --- his brother son to become king. He was in contact with the Italians and there was in following of Hitler. He told his son to avoid the war, to sign the papers _____ British and stuff like that.

Q. So, you're saying that the people weren't unanimous? Some people wanted to ---

A. No, that was political, politicians not the people.

Q. How did the population react?

A. They did not like Germans at all. I remember in World War I, part of Yugoslavia was occupied by Greeks. I remember the cruelty of what the Germans did.

Q. But there probably were different attitudes among the people from Croatia?

A. The Croats most of all, they come to the Yugoslavians after World War I. They betrayed Austria, they betrayed Yugoslavia too. They went to Yugoslavia to avoid the calamity in Austria. But they were good friends. The _____ the Slovenians and the Croats all was with Austria. It was Austrian educated. _____. Part of _____ was 500 years under Turks occupation. That is the difference. Different culture, the _____ did not like each other either. It took Turkish, the Muslim religion very good with the Turks and they changed the religion and become Muslim.

Q. Let me ask you something. When in April the Germans came in, where were you?

A. I was assigned down in Macedonia to _____ and we tried to escape because it was already sabotage. I mean that was the so called five _____. We had many Germans in Yugoslavia. Cultural joins, they were all preparing for Hitler to march in, so the air field, the military air field we had to _____, but then we bought this air plane from Germany. There was already _____ and we wanted to escape the occupation. We marched to Greece and _____ was the last facility to escape to go with the British army. But the British only took major and up but not the junior officers, so I had to stay in Greece. Then they come back to _____ the _____ group. So, the ship that took the British that took the Yugoslavians was in the Mediterranean Sea and then they brought them to POW camps. So it was -- I could not come to report as prisoner of war -- it was supported Yugoslavian army in the country.

Q. Who were they?

A. They were _____ the king's loyal people.

Q. Had they been organized before the war?

A. They were organized in Greece, Poland I don't know where. They became more political and they were assigned to organize the group.

Q. Why did you more choose them?

A. I was not communist, I was not socialist so where should I go.

Q. Was this a very organized movement?

A. Yes, in the beginning it was organized. We had good contact with the British and they were supporting but not regularly. So we had to -- we was left with the Yugoslavian arms and that stuff. When Hitler came to Yugoslavia the communists were good friends so they had contact with Hitler. The communists told us that Hitler was going to show how to build socialism, so we should join Hitler. When Hitler then came in '41 later on before he went against the Soviet Union, when he hanged a couple of them in _____ they then start to run to organize the communist movement. We had not much communist so it was when Hitler marched in. Criminals somehow were released or escaped. He ordered them back to prison they wanted to join the _____ so mostly the criminals were mostly communist. The communists said they were not criminals, society was responsible for their behavior. They started to fight us, to fight Germans, they fight us so you had to pass many _____.

Q. So there was never any coordination between the _____ army and the communists in fighting the common enemy which was Germany.

Q. At first there was but _____ these two guys over there in this so called SOE, this like our OSS, they ordered the _____ to get a commander from _____ . The _____ said they would fight _____ but political they won't have nothing to do with it. So, they started really fighting with the communists and the _____.

Q. How did you get all your supplies?

A. We get first from British and what's left from the army and then we tried to get in contact with an Italian group, a royalist group _____. They were supplying us with many stuff. They also arrested Mussolini and almost end the war when Americans come to Italy.

Q. How large was this movement and was it men and women?

A. Mostly men. It was almost all military people and nationalists from the civil population.

Q. In the city or the country?

A. In the country mostly. In the city it was difficult because the Germans were in the city under control.

Q. How secretive was it?

A. If more than two people know it's tough, it's no more secret. It is the procedure, but any way we tried to avoid any invitation but we couldn't avoid many communists that infiltrated this group, all the gestapo.

Q. What were your responsibilities?

A. I was to organize the youth in the group and the military units and I was liaison to the Italians. That was my duties.

Q. When you say you organized the youth, what did that mean? What did you do?

A. The nationalists, the country, I mean the Yugoslavs mostly to protect, to be ready when necessary to fight the Germans, the communists.

Q. Tell me more, tell me details how you spent your time?

A. I was mostly traveling from group to group. I also had a _____ many Germans and they became commandants from my city and I organized to get i.d. cards for them and then I was supplying to people in our organization. We organized and get -- I mean it was before the Germans come. So, we tried somehow to infiltrate to get what information what he was bragging about. Q. So, you actually got help from German people?

A. Not really, we didn't get from German any help.

Q. These people you're talking about?

A. That was personal friends. It had nothing to do with the organization. They didn't know what I think. The Germans therefore I was arrested so I mean, even they didn't trust the _____, the native group. The Germans didn't trust many people. The Germans we didn't have -- we had a meeting or conference, we didn't never.

Q. So, how long were you doing this, organizing?

A. It was not long. I mean it was starting in '41 and I was then arrested in March '42 so it was not long.

Q. How did you get arrested, tell me about that?

A. I was coming from Italy and I had a friend, I forgot his _____, he was by the _____, regular army. He was somehow given that information and he hate Hitler. So, his daughter was girlfriend for gestapo men and she betrayed them. So, she told them _____. So, since he was a German citizen there was _____ executed. I was sent back to gestapo for investigation. So the Germans then gave me to the Italians, _____ whatever you call it, and one of them should bring me to _____. So, we went to a cafeteria in Italy and there were a couple girls. He didn't know why I was arrested. He tried to _____ table _____ and I didn't know what he wants. The girls tried to tease him to let the gun and I run to the kitchen and escape but anyway I was later on arrested. This was one month. So, I come to the gestapo.

Q. So what did you do when you escaped?

A. I tried to come back to Yugoslavia and one month later they were looking for me. The gestapo found me. I tried to somehow avoid but it didn't work. So, I was then sentenced to death, death penalty. Later on my father is friends to the Yugoslavian police and the commander was the _____, he was somehow sympathetic to the marxists, he did not like Hitler. It was '43 he committed suicide when he was called to Berlin. So, he sent me to Dachau, illegal. I was sentenced in the books for the gestapo I was executed, but he sent me to a concentration camp so I had that penalty. But I was mad because that penalty was better than the concentration camp.

Q. Now, I don't want to stop you but I have a question. What was life like in Yugoslavia in this period in Belgrade under the Germans? What was happening? I'm just trying to get a sense --?

A. _____ you have to follow the laws and any sabotage any stuff they took from the city where it was endangered, they took hostage. If the place was under Germans, they took from each soldier ten, each civilian for each officer a hundred so that was the procedure. If you in some kind of occupation, so order _____ justice is to shut up. The second

one there was many an order that was arrested for reading some stuff on British or _____ it was _____ I mean the gestapo was working very good, very precise.

Q. Were there Yugoslav police working with the gestapo?

A. It was the native police, what do they call them? I forgot. It was a semi military organization that they have people who are supposed to be prisoner of war apply to go to the police directed from the _____, occupation _____. They sign capitalization and they was in charge of Yugoslavia. The Cratons joined the Germans. They got a king from Italy, Prince _____.

Q. But in Serbia this was also the case?

A. What?

Q. That the local police and the local militia were working with the Germans or not?

A. Not much. It was mostly in the city. They did not dare to come to the area that was either the communists, it was not so.

Q. What was daily life like in the city? Was there fear, was there enough to eat? What was your family doing?

A. That is for the _____ you get always the control of everything. You are supposed to deliver some kind what I told you but it was always a possibility to eat. It was so called black market enough on all kinds.

Q. Was your family safe?

A. My father was executed by the communists on December 20, 1944. I was in the concentration camp at the time.

Q. But up until then, he was --?

A. I think he had cancer and was sick.

Q. What I'm trying to understand is, is did life go on as normal? Were people frightened by the situation?

A. Not much frightened -- you were frightened rather from the communist, the situation, but the Germans never took time to go to the country. They were watching the main routes to Greece to _____ down there but you did not see them too much in the country.

Q. When you were involved with the resistance, were you personally aware of acts of sabotage?

A. Yes, we did not kill them but we stopped the British, stop the trains.
_____, and stuff.

Q. What stuff?

A. War material like ammunition and grenades. That was the main business. To stop them not to come a time when you spring the railroad track they come to take some time to repair, to come forward or you blow the train. It's not so easy to go forward. But they had so called _____ a special command to punish the population after this. All the area, when something happened, all fled the place. This was not pleasant to do such stuff, but we did.

Q. Were you personally involved in trying to stall the trains?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. You?

A. People, not necessarily myself.

Q. I want to know about you, yourself?

A. Me, myself, I did too, but you cannot do it by yourself. You have to have some group with you and we did.

Q. You had a group?

A. Yes.

Q. And you worked on stalling the trains?

A. Yes. One day I was to go somewhere else and it was 40 and I had to cross the railroad and the _____ were in the bunkers watching the bridges. I saw some light. I stopped, I didn't know, it was 20 Italians more playing the cards in the bunker and then all of them okay,

hands up. Nobody find anything. You couldn't buy everything for the Italian soldier, wine and so on, arms and stuff. It was not so.

Q. What other specific acts did you do for the resistance?

A. _____. We first organized and took on the people to save them to organize companies to organize units. To provide information, front information and stuff like that. We had _____ that's been illegal newspaper for information about front and situation and such stuff. It was meetings. You organized and everybody knows what they're doing and what they get to do.

Q. How did you get information?

A. We had radios, we had stuff. We listened to the BBC. It was not the voice of America, it was a different kind. So, we got from Switzerland.

Q. Was there a central meeting place?

A. No, some places we had to everybody with a radio with short waves and the radio was controlled by the Germans, but first they took the others, but you couldn't get it anyway. We got short waves and stuff. Many people are calling and they hid and they listened to this BBC or Switzerland. You get information and we had contact with _____. So, you got from France. And Germany let you hear what they were bragging and so on.

Q. What kind of man was _____?

A. Well, a very informed, political and stuff like this. We didn't trust British anyway so Britain thought if you were friend or enemy you get the same treatment. History, they tried Napoleon too. They are some like the Nazis, a little bit.

Q. So, are there any other examples you can remember of working with the resistance or should we move on?

A. There is not much to remember now. I was only a year or so with them.

Q. Any close calls for you? Any big risks you took?

A. If you walk through there you can be attacked by the communists. You have to live like a rabbit. To watch everything. It was, you get used to it and it's no big deal. You're young and you know what you want. You have to take precautions.

Q. What kind of precautions?

A. Precautions not to make mistake. You can't talk to -- we had special code words to talk like usually the organization is to talk, -- you can't talk to family or anybody.

Q. Did you see your family during this time?

A. Not much.

Q. Were you ever, other than that one time, were you ever caught or close to being caught?

A. Sometimes yes, I don't know what happened but the Germans went and blocked all the city and then everybody tried to get the military barracks and sometime some seems to me that they try us through the window, by passing the windows of the building. Then somebody with newspapers with holes, somebody was watching us but maybe I was lucky enough to be recognized or you get in trouble. For example, in Vienna, the gestapo didn't read the paper, and the guy sent me to the gestapo building. I went over there and I read this direction and I went out and didn't say anything.

Q. Were you afraid?

A. What can you be afraid? There is not much fear. If you are afraid you cannot think. You cannot be afraid. If you are afraid you stay home. That is the rule. You don't do it if you are afraid. Fear cannot be mixed with what you're doing. Somehow in split second you get, but you try to overcome and to survey the situation to take proper handling. Stuff you have to do.

Q. Did you ever have contact with the communists?

A. No, we'd kill each other, but I didn't have.

Q. I've done some reading and that's why I want to ask you this. Is my sense that the communists and the resistance army had different methods and had different goals?

A. Yes. We had two _____ and the one I think was the rank. One was communists, the second one was _____. The communists were almost trying to tell

the tales of the Soviet Union and everything and they tried to do much as possible in killing the German soldiers to force the people to join them to create terror. For them there was something bigger so _____ and so on and from the communists army this was terrible. They were worse than the Germans in many places. They were robbing from the people and take everything, money and food. The people mostly were afraid from the communists more than from the Germans in many places.

Q. Now, you figured out that it would be better to go to Dachau than to stay in prison?

A. Stay in prison, the penalty to be executed is better than to go to Dachau.

Q. So, what happened. Tell me about your going to Dachau?

A. Nothing. You were transported over there. You come before camp, you come to this quarantined barracks, blocks. And then after a couple weeks or 40 days you get registered. No, before you come there, you are staying in the snow and the rain and they give you the number. The transports bring in the _____ and they establish the carts and then after this you go and are distributed to the blocks. In Dachau there were mostly after professionals and so, distribution. I come to an Austrian guy _____, in block 16 and from that I was working with a Slovenian couple. We went to the _____, to the train on the railroad station. The couple was -- it was not -- with a black train. They were stealing the civilian -- as you go to work outside the camp in Mauthassen, in Dachau they give you civilian red paint and then later on I was working potato cell to peel the potatoes to sort them and to peel them. The guards, it was mostly this _____ from Poland. They called a lot of Pollocks, the Germans, they so called _____ where you put the core and you could fry the potato to eat. They didn't care too much. They took for themselves the potatoes. So, it was not something, not bad. Then in some walking across the street to plantation stuff, and many went to Sauxenhausen which was also a branch of Dachau. Then, there was one time I was no more drove outside camp. We were cleaning inside and then I don't know what for reason but 600 or so were transferred to Mauthausen.

Q. Okay, let's talk a little more about Dachau? You were there for how long? What were the dates?

A. Almost one year.

Q. Do you remember the dates?

A. I came on November 5 in Dachau, 1942.

Q. And you left?

A. I left in October, end of October on a transport to Mauthausen.

Q. In '43?

A. In '43, yes. I come also in November of '43, I don't remember the dates, to Mauthausen. It was a terrible transport. We went from Dachau to Czechoslovakia. _____ on the train that was not closed. The wagons were half _____. It was snow and everything and we had to sleep on the floor in the wet. It took 14 days so we were staying a couple times and we come to Mauthausen. I cannot remember the route.

Q. What was your impression of Dachau?

A. Organized pure political, best organized. I met many Austrians over there in block 4. The Czechs were kitchen personnel. It was not bad. Then you have to wash before you come -- same as Mauthausen -- when you come to your block you have to wash first in your foot locker, and you have your meal or supper already. To your place, but you have to wash. You have to do, so it wasn't much to eat but discipline and not much terror from the SS inside the camp.

Q. The guards were okay?

A. Outside the guards were we had kapos to be the guards. The guards were washing us, so somehow we did it and not allowed to talk to us. The guard was different SS, not in camp, the block -- we had more difficulty with our kapos, with the person from he prison area in the camp.

Q. Why more difficulty?

A. Well, they were beating you. They were stealing your food. They were kicking you out to the work place. They didn't let you stay. You had to work outside camp, too. They keep you busy.

Q. These were German criminal prisoners?

A. Yes, as a political prisoner you could not get any position if you wanted. It was mostly criminal.

Q. Were there Jewish prisoners there?

A. In Dachau there was only one small guy that was cleaning the shoes for the SS. I don't know what happened to him later. First time Jews in Mauthausen, Jews come 2,000 some. It was the last transport for the Jews and then in '45 they come from Auschwitz. As a Jew in Dachau and communist you could not survive. As a Jew or communist in Dachau they send you to Auschwitz or kill you there.

Q. While you were there, this happened?

A. Oh, yes. It was maybe some in the _____ in the country, the role call -- when the work commander -- you had behind there there was the group, the small barrack. The shoe maker and so there was shops and behind them was the special section for the Jews. I do not know what happened to them, it was not much. We saw the yellow _____ and politically we had red. Criminals had green, homosexual had pink, the _____ Jehovah and gypsies had blue.

Q. So there were Jewish prisoners there?

A. Yes, but not much. I did not have contact. They were isolated. What happened to them they send them to Auschwitz or destroyed over there.

Q. When you were working or had your appeals in your barracks were you mixed with other prisoners or were you with only political prisoners?

A. We _____ they brought special for the management, for the criminals. All of them were political or maybe the blue.

Q. I'm confused?

A. Blue triangle for the bible, so called gypsies or the Spanish. Spanish had good position, they were kitchen personnel.

Q. Did you say that the criminal prisoners and the political prisoners were the same?

A. No. The criminal were brought only for the management in the camp, for the kapos, or block _____. The barrack was mostly Czechs that spoke German very well. Then it was criminal from the _____ the main office _____. This means they're for the camp and it was criminal. They were distributing them and organizing mostly criminals.

End of Tape 1

Tape 2

Q. We were talking about the different kinds of prisoners at Dachau and I'm wondering were you separated according to your type or did you work with people with different classifications.

A. With people who were French, I mean nobody your number and your name put you in the working group and you went to work.

Q. Did the political prisoners work with the POWs?

A. No. The POW was a different kind. It wasn't Geneva Convention, they were entitled to work but different procedure.

Q. Were some prisoners treated better than other prisoners?

A. I don't think so. I did not see. Maybe the homosexuals were treated better but the normal people, everybody the same.

Q. Did you come in contact with a lot of the homosexual prisoners?

A. No. It was not like it in the camp so they were isolated. They had all the good positions too. They were mostly musicians and stuff like this.

Q. Do you think the political prisoners were treated better than some of the other people?

A. No, this was wars. It was not different, we were all political except the camp personnel. It was from the instructions of the political department or gestapo. Many of them they get to go to the city. That was also different. In Germany I think the sentence required more than five years imprisonment they were executed, the death penalty it was. It was mostly, my kapo was a guy that stole a parcel in the post office. He was upstairs so that this should happening it means the end of the war. They were after the war to serve.

Q. Now, I remember reading that when you went to Dachau you were a clerk, in the administration?

A. No. I was not a clerk. A guy _____, he was original in camp, a clerk and he saved my life. If I say I was an officer I could be executed. He said are you stupid. You say

you are an employee. He changed my card. He saved my life. He was later on in the _____, of Czechoslovakian decent. He saved my life. I was never in the office.

Q. What was an average day like?

A. You'd have to get up at 5:00 to wash, to get the coffee, not really coffee. It was from grain. If you are fast you get warm, if you're slow you get cold. That was morning. You had to go to roll call to get counted. Then, group formation. If you are attached to a working commander you have to join your kapo and then walk out. If you are not attached, they put you there and write your number and you work and you work until 6:00, 7:00, it depends, and then come back. We'd march, _____. That was -- we had in Dachau Sunday was off and everybody was sitting somewhere preparing their stuff. You get wood down and in two weeks they were gone. _____, that was the daily life.

Q. When you came back from the fields, wherever you were working at 6:00 then what happened?

A. You had to wash yourself to get the sheets washed. They watched you shower, if you washed your face and head proper and you went inside to get your supper. It was in Mauthausen too. You had your food locker and it was already there you were sitting somewhere to eat.

Q. What did you eat?

A. You got this _____ military bread, dry so it can stay ten years. Two pieces and they give you some margarine or some stuff. That was all, and some coffee. That was -- lunch you get some soup, some cabbage or beets or I don't know. It was mostly vegetable soup. You had to eat fast. You didn't have one hour or half hour. You had to eat and go to work. It was terrible. We stand under the tree, the slope, eating your soup. You cannot choose. I wasn't a big eater, so I'd save my lard so some people would have a piece of bread -- when they distributed the soup they left some of this in _____ and you had to run to get this _____ extra. Mostly the stuff they distributed they hit you with this spoon, it was not the kind of human. You see different kinds of people. What you learn in this civilization is the whole situation disappears, you are as you are born, animal. You see the animal behavior. It

was terrible. For example, if you are the last and somebody fell down, you pick up the people in the front took care of him. They kill them on the way because they're hit and they didn't want to carry them because sometime you are weak too. They kill him before they brought them in the camp, so it was terrible. You see it was not too many relations because everybody wanted to save himself. Like _____ says _____. It was not human. You tried to avoid everything and some people you can talk or communicated or you're thinking about past families and stuff. It was sad.

Q. Did you make any friend there? Did you have maybe a partner that you could help each other?

A. No, it was impossible because tomorrow you are taken to another commander or another barrack or the block. Not the kind you can deal with. I tried to be human with the people but not special relation.

Q. Did you have your own bed in the barracks?

A. We had three floors of bed. First, down there four, two heads are here and two heads are there. Second floor, the same. Third floor was three only. Two on one side and one. That was the beds. In Dachau, it was two peoples each but it depends on if there comes a new transport, the put in like sardines. This is you cannot change the positions. But anyway you are tired and sleep. Sometimes they were stealing their shoes. You cannot imagine. I read a book before I come to Dachau it was in the western something new, it was for the World War I. I forgot who wrote the book, in World War I. And the guy that escaped from Dachau went to Switzerland and he wrote about the concentration camp and it was something new, and there was a description of a Dachau book about concentration camp in Germany, and I could not imagine at all before I come in, you understand.

Q. Were there a lot of new transports coming in?

A. In Dachau they not come much, every three or four months. But Dachau keeps certain amounts of prisoners. I think they had 42,300 some and all the group, one group they said 42,000 sent to Mauthausen a year later, so they have -- I don't know how much they had to have

and never exceed. I think it was before the SS decided to put the regime to work in the war industry and they took the ability in Austria, the industry facility, needed prisoners. The SS used them before they destroyed them. Dachau was only to work for the needs of the camp, industry stuff. We had to plant our own vegetables and take care of all the cleaning and stuff.

Mauthausen was the center. 80,000 prisoners came to Mauthausen under different branches. Going to Mauthausen was a different story. Mauthausen was discipline too, so you get your food but you didn't stay long in Mauthausen. I came in November I think. I was already in Christmas transport to _____. That was the camp, the camp and four barracks. It was a small one. The guy, the _____, the SS man was announced all officers and all dignity and he did it with order. The kapos couldn't bother you in camp. Outside okay, but gave us order. It came, I was surprised it was Christmas. He ordered the kitchen to give tea with rum. I fainted, almost, you are weak. It was dumb. Then he distributed the cigarettes himself. Not _____, not nobody. So, it was somehow human. We had good music, good theater. One guy came and said in Germany the potatoes are good, but in Dachau they _____. Music was okay. He come with his daughter to listen to the bands. It was somehow, the SS kitchen was the same in camp. So, I met friends, I went to high school and such. _____ Joseph. I didn't know it was German, but a German office and he was afraid when he saw me. He said don't talk, and later on he saw me and said I cannot talk but I can inform your parents that you are here. So, when he went to eat the lunch he went to my barrack, went to my bed, asked me where I sleep and left his food. I didn't see him anymore.

Q. How long were you in Mauthausen, the main camp?

A. Mauthausen, not long, one month two months, not long. They didn't keep you. You get the number and there were three or four central camps. Buchenwald, Dachau, Mauthausen and Auschwitz and Birkenau, where you get the number. So, when you get to Mauthausen and get the number, they send you then -- in Mauthausen it was 16, it was _____ one, two and three, and then _____ industry, steel industry. Then it was _____. It was many camps then. Upstairs it was camp B. It was

mostly officers for the construction below. But, the records they start to _____.

They didn't finish, the war was over. Where we were they were drilling and then that was the stuff that we did. That was terrible. No food. What we get from the companies that we were working, _____ it was many companies. If you worked there was contact with the SS. They paid the SS I don't know what. There was lunch at midnight and you worked night shift and they bring you those sandwiches with some fish and coffee. Then you have to work, it was very difficult. You had to load the sand for the cement. In Mauthausen, we had logger police. Special criminals brought and then we had down there in the working place we had so called _____. That is construction police. They were chasing you, beating you, taking your number and report and when you come into camp you get 25 from behind. At that time it was logger, that means the prisoner camp, the camp foreman. It was _____ and the second one there was Lawrence, I forgot his last name. He was killing people like nothing. They kill people and then hang them on the entrance. It was terrible. You know you could be killed any second. Not from the SS but from the criminal police or kapos or block elders. When I come from _____ I don't know, it was the beginning of '44. It was somehow still cold, and I was working down there in the -- the drill, there was _____ and then we had to carry them on the shoulder. If you go to the latrine or the toilet you get a mark. Before you come back the kapos were kicking you, beating, but still was some place to hide in that tunnel by the _____ and the water was running down there and you slipped into the cold water. If you slip you are in trouble. They will kill you if you don't come when the group goes back to camp. It was the SS, didn't have to _____ they were going, next it was _____ so the SS _____ to the _____ and they come and they go to the tombs. They count you, they divide you to the groups and so the companies they're supposed to work for them. I did not stay there long. I got _____ and I went to the doctor and they cut me here and I was so called _____, sick, and I lost my command and it was worse. I was assigned to a group we were traveling with a train to _____ maybe 40 miles from then to _____ to new railroad reserve station to cut

the _____ and it was not bad. It was September or end of August we went to the garden to the vegetables, we were so stuffed we were eating. At 4:00 in the morning you go down there to the railroads to load four or five wagons and then to travel to _____ and _____ was the distribution direct to _____ the railroad, that was the second train. On the way there was bombing. We couldn't sleep in the car. We were standing somewhere in the station before the _____ alarm was over, two hours, three hours. From there it's already 11 hours and we were in the command and was mostly shuffled, work. After this, it was September until the snow start up. I don't know how I escaped this. I went to work mostly in the _____ there was a French doctor, a nice guy and he let me ride sick where I was to go and then I came back to work in _____. I was not in good shape and the small tracks, the small machines, all the steam machines and soon them come to load the cement or sand on this. When they go back after ten minutes comes the second one or so. What we did is we opened this _____ stuff and put fine sand in to damage the cylinder and when the steam goes not too much power. They had to repair. Sometimes we were lucky not to get the steam to work. It was already '45. Maybe one week before we get the locals to work and then again we did stuff. Then maybe they find out and there was SS in prisoner overcoat and I was about to unscrew one of them from one side they came to me. I didn't know he was SS, he asked me in Polish because he is Yugoslav. He asked _____, so I told him in Polish _____. He looked at me you dogs and then took me to the commando over there and I got 25, I got 75. I could not work. That was I think February of '45. He put me with the container with food, get me in the truck and brought me to the camp. I came to the hospital but there was food. They put me in the barracks, 23, that was crematorium, I mean it was the gas chamber barrack, but I was lucky, there was no more material. It did not work, so I was there until the Americans came. It was terrible. In the morning they give you bread. It's approximately one kilogram, and you had bread and you are in _____ it was very not much to eat and then the soup was the potatoes went to the SS kitchen and what we get is the shell, the peel. It was dirty. If I went one more month longer, I would not survive it

I'm sure. I could not go. When you stand, you fall down. I was 38 kilograms, when the Americans came. It was in '44 I think the Hungarians Jews come and it was a couple thousand and then all the kapos, all the _____ they were chasing them to work from four to eleven at night and they were not allowed to see doctors or anything. The men died.

Q. So they were treated much differently?

A. Oh, yes, it was inhuman what they did to them. It was mostly people fresh from the _____, to be beaten, but I saw very few SS people. There was one _____ they called him _____. There was a blonde SS who was killing and than a couple of them I forgot his name. It was mostly the criminals, the German criminals that were doing the job. It was terrible. Also, the so called clerk in the camp was Luxembourg, Alfred Shockfield, something like that. He was the one that organized the whole stealing and there was a second one who bartered. It was also shortly before the Americans come and organized and they called it _____, you get from somewhere not to protect the provisions but protect themselves. They were the least to be killed when freedom come. It was not much to tell.

Q. How many different camps or subcamps of Matthausen were you in?

A. I was in _____, a short time in _____. They were forcing the British _____. There was Doctor Kramer, a prisoner who was a kapo in this department and I come back to _____ and then from _____ I came direct to _____.

Q. You arrived in _____ when?

A. In the beginning, March of '44.

Q. Out of all these different camps, which was the worst?

A. _____. The best was _____, but _____ was about the worst. Mauthausen was not bad, for discipline and there wasn't much to do.

Q. Why was _____ the worst?

A. The _____, the SS took the prisoners over to work for the war industry and there was obligations to the company, to the civilian company and there was also sick people that

was already sent to work. You could not stay in the camp. They don't care if you're sick. You have to go to fulfill that amount of prisoners, but the company was protesting because you cannot, if they send you over there, you cannot move. I remember the short '45, '44 so they did not have enough guard the so called _____, the last hope. The blue uniforms, not SS, they had two -- we had to carry people. They were watching the _____ before America comes. _____. Two days before the Americans come they disappeared.

Q. In _____ what were the living conditions like?

A. Terrible. You were wet, you cannot dry anywhere. You had to sleep four and three in there and you didn't get shoes. We were always going all the time no food. I remember when the Americans come I come to hospital. I had diarrhea for typhus sick to my stomach and they put us first in the tents and they brought us to a military hospital for Germans and there were the German POWs and they were trying to wash me, the medical personal to clean me but the could not. It took one month or more to get normal. Sometimes you don't like to remember.

Q. Were you able to wash? Were there toilets?

A. Where?

Q. _____?

A. _____ the toilet was in the barrack block, room A and room B and in the middle was a fountain. You had to wash in there. It was a small fountain you had to wash. It was not in the middle, but block seven there were still latrines, so for 800 people toilets, and you had to go over there at night. So, it was toilet in the barrack but it was for the block master and for the kapos but not for us. What was in the latrine, it was black market. The people had to buy or sell, they went into to buy cigarettes or food. Somebody want to sell something they brought over there. It was going I think until May twenty something, '44. That was the SS commander from the camp so called it _____, somebody reported to him and they came at night and killed maybe 70 or 80 people that was fleeing from the latrines. In the morning the next time he told us at the roll call place that if somebody tells the civilians or anybody they will be killed

as soon as they talk about this. But a couple days later, the gestapo the commander from Mauthausen he was commander for all the 70,000 or 80,000, he come and he took them away, took the pistol and everything. We got the _____ means, _____. It was then _____. It was before on the -- he was different but killing anyway. During his reign you saw occasionally on the barbed wire, dead or coming back from vacation with a sign _____ on the entrance. It was in _____ a guy tried to escape but the SS did not kill him. The super kapo killed him when he tried to escape. SS I did not fear that much from SS as from the _____ people.

Q. And these kapos were from what countries?

A. They were mostly criminals from Germany. You had a couple czechs too. So, I mean the Czechs were from Austria. They didn't their own country and so they didn't have tradition or nothing there. There was an organization that was a military industry organization and they were working for the Germany. The driver to the company when we were in _____. They did not talk to you they kicked you. You try to get cigarettes or talk to him. Many people are watching him but ten people try to get something they pick you up. In Mauthausen they have a ladies house for the prisoner so you take her in. That was when somebody applied mostly the Germans to go to the bordello. They send the application you must go to his home to visit the staff. On Sunday they are walking the main street in Mauthausen by walking the promenade. We are going behind them because they are smoking good cigarettes. That was Mauthausen.

Q. The Germans were strolling through Mauthausen on Sundays with their wives and girlfriends. I'm confused.

A. No, if they tried to apply to go to these ladies they had to pay. A copy of his application was sent to his wife to get divorced or something to break the family.

Q. Who was strolling through?

A. The ladies on Sunday, they were walking through the main streets.

Q. That's what I mean. Who were these ladies?

A. The prostitutes, all the prisoners they brought from Auschwitz. Auschwitz was a booming camp and a Jewish camp. Auschwitz, Birkenau and _____. I don't know what nation they were but they brought for a special purpose, propaganda, and they were walking on Sunday and they were smoking good cigarettes and they were throwing away and ten, twenty people tried to get them from the floor, the dirt.

Q. What else?

A. I don't know.

Q. Where people dying a lot of sickness?

A. Oh yes. We had for example in block 23, this so called crematorium where I was the last couple months there was every night dying 50 or 60. There were 600 people there. There was supposed to be a washroom where there was _____ before somebody come to pick them up. But they could not get into the crematorium, the gas chamber to cremate. It was done in camp to protect you from the bombing so _____ to protect you from this and they were throwing there too. The people they get something to eat this meat. There really was just the bones. You could not get really few meat. The prisoners in camp tried and later on they tried administration to put some fence to protect this cannibalism.

Q. You saw this?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. This was common?

A. This was common, yes. In '45 the last months, March, April.

Q. They cooked the meat?

A. Cook, some cooked some didn't. They eat cold. They cannot wait to eat the meat. They were eating -- some fugitive from the front come into and got wrong way and come into the camp, the SS was scared and put into us they have horses and then at night the prisoners killed the horse and they tried to eat him up. You cannot imagine how terrible it was to fight for the bread. When the Americans came it was not so fast to bring the food. There was killing in camp for the kapos that -- the poor and they were cooked in the kitchen. They cooked them alive and

so was the killings. I could not work. I couldn't do anything. There was prisoners looking for the SS people. They were already long gone. There was _____ in the population. I cannot imagine the hasidic didn't know what was going on upstairs. The Americans brought to demonstrate but the American did not give us food for one day because one general was killed.

Q. The Americans punished you?

A. Punished us all time they didn't give us to eat because you cannot let this stuff to justice. So, mostly Russians they were, but at that time mostly they were robbing the population there some guy took the sauerkraut and he was dead. They did this stuff. It was in this _____ cell or tent there was hospital and the American nurse let me box of milk chocolates. I could not eat. I tried but it was so -- I give it to _____ next to me was a Polish guy _____. He ate it all. He ate all of it and two days later he was dead. A young fellow. He died.

Q. Can you think of anything that you did in these camps out of desperation that you can't even imagine you've done?

A. No, you cannot think. You are like under hypnosis. You have no proper thinking because _____ you just count today how long you'll stay alive. There was no political or philosophical thought. You are not normal. It is impossible to do anything because I cannot walk ten feet or twenty feet and not fall down. I had to sleep on the third floor because if you sleep down there on first floor on the second there was a Polish or Czech guy so called _____ he'd kill you to get your food. There was killing from _____. They were killing the people at night they were watching the room. So, you are thinking how to escape to sleep, to lie down. I was lucky I did not have to go to toilet so often so I was sometime all day long. I did not move from my place.

Q. Anything that just had to do because his wasn't normal?

A. Nothing, you tried to get your little coffee to get the peel of potatoes to eat and to get through small piece of bread. That was the daily --.

Q. How about medical experiments?

A. What?

Q. Did you know anything either in Dachau or in Mauthassan camps about medical experiments?

A. In Mauthausen behind the crematorium there was experiments. I don't know what they did, but there were Yugoslav doctor. Doctor _____ was working but I didn't talk. He said stay away. Many people who get good condition they were commanded by the kapo to work in the crematorium and after two months all the people working there were dead so they can't tell what is going on. It was not far, the next city to me so sometime he talked to me. He did not tell what they were doing.

Q. Did you notice anything in Dachau?

A. In Dachau I didn't notice anything. There were no such facilities. In Mauthausen it was already and I think somebody told me it started in Auschwitz too, but not in Dachau.

Q. But you didn't know anybody who had been treated?

A. No. I didn't know.

Q. Were there many suicides?

A. Not intentionally. Somebody run and get killed by the SS or so. You are weak, there was no way to kill yourself. You come so far and you wait for what happen to you. You are not able to make any decision. The beginning okay, the first time you come over there you think it is best dead and so what is process in time go forward you lose everything, proper feeling proper thinking. You already have written yourself off. At the same time I didn't believe I am still alive.

Q. Any efforts for people to try to escape?

A. Oh, yes there were a couple escapes really and I think a couple come through from Dachau. So, it was as I said I think in '45 in Mauthausen was a snow storm and there was like a small _____ and it was the snow and some tried to escape but they were all killed. All of them dead. Only one that I remember that people tried to escape. From _____ you couldn't. Every where was the SS leaving the barracks. You could not go

far. You were shaved, your head, and second you had the zebra clothes. You have your number here and here a number.

End of Tape 2

Conclusion of Interview.